UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/C.3/48/23
1 December 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-eighth session
THIRD COMMITTEE
Agenda item 113

REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS

Letter dated 29 November 1993 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Osman Ertuğ, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 113.

(Signed) Inal BATU
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

LETTER FROM MR. OSMAN ERTUĞ ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to refer to a statement made by the Greek Cypriot delegate at the meeting of the Third Committee on 8 November 1993, under agenda item 113 entitled "Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees, and displaced persons and humanitarian questions".

As it has become habitual practice for the Greek Cypriot administration, the Greek Cypriot delegate has again seized this opportunity to demonstrate his side's deep-seated hostility towards the Turkish Cypriot people and its utter disregard for Turkish Cypriot rights. This is yet another instance of the abuse of the title of "the Government of Cyprus" by the Greek Cypriot side, a title which it usurped by force of arms in 1963 at our expense. I am, therefore, obliged to respond to his unfounded allegations in writing, in exercise of our right of reply. I am grateful to the Republic of Turkey for enabling me to do so.

The Turkish Cypriot side believes that the subject of refugees and displaced persons is a humanitarian issue which should not be exploited for propaganda purposes. Our conduct in dealing with this issue as the first party to suffer from this problem in Cyprus is a testimony to our sincere and humanitarian approach to the matter.

The Secretary-General's reports of the 1963-1974 period abound with evidence of the suffering inflicted upon our community, one fourth of which had been rendered refugees as a result of the Greek Cypriot attacks on us aimed at breaking our resistance to the annexation of the island to Greece (enosis) and the campaign of ethnic cleansing it involved. A few examples would help to refresh the memories of those who tend to forget or ignore the origins of this problem:

> "126. When the disturbances broke out in December 1963 and continued the first part of 1964, thousands of Turkish Cypriots fled from their homes, taking with them only what they could drive or carry, and sought refuge in what they considered to be safer Turkish Cypriot villages and areas ..." (S/8286, 8 December 1967).

A more detailed account of the suffering imposed upon the Turkish Cypriot people by the refugee problem can be found in the following extract from the Secretary-General's report, S/5950 of 10 September 1964:

> "190. In addition to losses incurred in agriculture and in industry during the first part of the year, the Turkish community had lost other sources of its income, including the salaries of over 4,000 persons who were employed by the Cyprus Government and by public and private concerns located in the Greek Cypriot zones. The trade of the Turkish community had considerably declined during the period, owing to the existing situation, and unemployment reached a very high level, as approximately 25,000 Turkish Cypriots had become refugees. Expenditure of the Turkish Communal Chamber

on development and other projects, as well as other expenditure, had dropped considerably as a yearly subsidy formerly received from the Government had ceased to be granted in 1964. Furthermore, a large part of its remaining resources had to be used for unemployment relief and other forms of compensation as approximately half of the population came to be on relief. In accordance with figures published by the Turkish Cypriot Communal Chamber, the number of persons receiving some kind of assistance from the Red Crescent relief amounted to about 56,000, including 25,000 displaced persons, 23,500 unemployed and 7,500 dependents of missing persons, disabled and others."

All efforts aimed at the return of these refugees to their homes and their rehabilitation in the ensuing 11 years were frustrated by the Greek Cypriot side.

This is the origin of the present situation, as also confirmed by the following extract from a Council of Europe report by Mr. Franz Karasek, the then General Rapporteur of the Political Affairs Committee (see document 3600, para. 11, dated 10 April 1975):

"Economic, social and educational inequality, as well as insecurity for personal life, during the last eleven years, were the origins of inter-community mistrust and fears, of political tension and regional as well as communal isolation between the Turkish Cypriot and the Greek Cypriot populations ... This created in the Turkish community the feeling of being underprivileged and oppressed ... Humanitarian suffering was at the origin of an eleven-year-long Cyprus crisis."

Thus the Greek Cypriot side's charges on the issue are clearly misdirected, as the Greek Cypriot side has only itself to blame for the displaced persons problem arising out of the events of 1974 and affecting both sides, which, in any event, were the inevitable consequence of the Greek Junta's coup d'état of 15 July 1974. More than half the Turkish Cypriot population of the island left their homes, many of them for the second or third time, as a result of the events triggered by the coup, and regrouped in Northern Cyprus where they could find a safe haven.

The regrouping of each of the two peoples in a separate part of the island was formalized between the two sides at the third round of the inter-communal talks held at Vienna from 31 July to 2 August 1975, where the two sides agreed on a voluntary transfer of their remaining populations to their respective zones, Turkish Cypriots to the North and Greek Cypriots to the South (see the annex to S/11789, dated 5 August 1975). This agreement on an exchange of populations was implemented under the supervision and assistance of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus and the way was paved for a bi-communal, bi-zonal settlement on the island (see S/11789 Add.1, dated 10 September 1975).

The solution of the Cyprus question on the basis of a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation was agreed upon between the leaders of the two sides, President Rauf Denktaş and Archbishop Makarios, at the high-level meeting of 12 February 1977, and has since constituted the basis of the negotiating process. This agreement was reaffirmed by another High-Level Agreement between President Denktaş and Mr. Kyprianou, reached on 19 May 1979. The principles of

bi-communality and bi-zonality as the fundamental features of a federal solution have also been repeatedly reaffirmed by the reports of the Secretary-General and relevant United Nations resolutions.

The Greek Cypriot views and demands on the question of displaced persons confirm our long-held belief that the Greek Cypriots are bent on re-creating the unacceptable conditions of the pre-1974 period, when they could treat the Turkish Cypriots, then dispersed among them, as mere hostages and political pawns. Our people, who were then attacked, massacred, harassed and mistreated, cannot be expected to put themselves, once again, in such a position of vulnerability.

Our peoples legitimate fears and aspirations in this respect were echoed in an article by the prominent British journalist-author Roger Scruton, which was published in the London Times on 22 November 1983 under the heading "Who will heed the Turks of Cyprus?" Below is a relevant extract:

> "During subsequent negotiations, the Greek Cypriots refused to contemplate any solution that recognized the legal personality of the Turkish community: the Turks were to remain a minority, protected by a bill of 'minority rights', and therefore dispersed among the people who had tried to murder them. The assumption that the Turks would even consider something so mad is a fair expression of the contempt in which the Greek Cypriots hold their fellow islanders."

Even more ominous for the Turkish Cypriots in this respect are the public lamentations of Archbishop Chrisostomos, the head of the powerful Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus, that the Greek Cypriots no longer enjoy the possibility of using terror and violence against the Turkish Cypriots. His shocking remarks, which are extracted from a statement published in the Greek Cypriot daily Makhi on 22 March 1993, speak for themselves and therefore require no elaboration:

> "Had our people lived within the occupied areas, we would have been able to wage guerilla warfare. Unfortunately, our people fled these places and left the Turks unchallenged in these areas."

I should be grateful if the present letter were circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 113.

(Signed) Osman ERTUĞ
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus